

July 28, 1954

(EXCERPT)

CBS WORLD NEWS ROUNDUP, 8:00 A.M.

NED CALPER: In Europe the mysterious case of Otto John remains the top story in West Germany this morning and we're going to cross over to the continent now to bring you the latest from Bonn, Richard C. Hottelet reporting:

RICHARD C. HOTTELET: This strange case has become still stranger in the past twenty-four hours. The latest twist is a report that John has managed to smuggle two letters out of East Berlin indicating that he is being held against his will. One of the letters is said to have been mailed inside East Berlin and to have been addressed to John's wife. Hardly likely, though, that such a note would have slipped through Communist censorship. Western police have at last got themselves a warrant for the arrest of Dr. Wehlegemuth, the Communist physician who drove John to East Berlin, but he is out of reach behind the Iron Curtain.

By and large the case has thus far stayed pretty much on the dime novel mystery level. Fears that John might discredit the entire democratic system in Western Germany or destroy the western espionage network in Eastern Germany have so far not been realized. Here in Bonn a parliamentary security committee met for eight hours last night and came to the not very surprising conclusion that there must be something wrong with the German FBI if its chief winds up behind the Iron Curtain, irrespective of how he got there. Politicians are

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demanding a cleanup, but the case is apparently not playing into the hands of rightist extremists.

In Eastern Germany the Communist party organ this morning declares that John is the man who knows the most secret plans of Western Germany and implies, but does not say, that he is spilling them. Responsible Western sources say, however, that John knew very little about espionage in the East. What he did know a good deal about is counter-espionage and security planning in Western Germany.

So the first hard evidence that John is talking might therefore be, not mass arrests in Eastern Germany, but a purge of the Communist party in Western Germany.
